

Practical and Spiritual Exercises

1. There is the recurring phrase throughout the story of Joseph: "And the Lord was with Joseph." This week, pick two days and determine to live as fully those two days into the phrase: "The Lord is with me." Note how doing this affects your confidence, your decision making, your patience, your kindness, etc. The Lord is with you, believe it!
2. Reflect on how God generally connects with you; is it more like how God engaged with Abraham, i.e. direct, open, confrontive, or is it similar to the way God connected with Joseph, i.e. more subtle, hidden, quiet. Take some time to thank God for tailoring His activity with us to meet our personalities, styles, the way God made us.
3. Think of five ways your identity as a Christian stands out in the midst of a fairly secular culture. As Joseph was a Hebrew in an Egyptian culture, how are you being intentionally Christian in an alien culture?
4. Sometime this week you will need to make a decision about right and wrong. Apply the seven-fold test in the sermon notes, and ask God to guide you and keep you strong to do the right thing.
5. Spend some time with Yeats' poem on beauty (sermon notes). Keep it in mind as you go through the check-out line at the grocery store this week and notice all the "beautiful people" magazines. What is missing there that Yeats captures so beautifully?
6. This week, when you are ever tempted to play or feel the victim, develop a plan of action. Joseph rose to prominence, saved his people, because he had a plan. We all absolutely need a plan, whether it is in our spending, our eating, our vocation, our living. When you hit an obstacle this week, ask first, "OK, now, what's my plan?"
7. You may not be able to "save" Africa today, but you and I can do something. Call Robin Coen, Coordinator of Missions, and see where you might serve to relieve suffering here (376-6615, ext. 120).
8. Try fasting from lunch this week and save the money and send it to the church and indicate that it is for relieving the suffering in Africa. Our United Methodist Committee on Relief is actively involved there.
9. Pray for Doug and Suzanne Burton's children, Dan and Debra Fitzgerald, who are missionaries in Africa and for Mike and Erin Nilon, who are with the Peace Corps in Africa.
10. As you take your child to the doctor for shots, for pills, remember that thousands of African children would survive if only they had the medicines we take for granted. Pray that God might call persons from Trinity to begin a ministry in Africa that will save lives and share the Good News of Jesus' love.

Joseph's Story - an Overview

Genesis 37

Joseph dreamed
His brothers schemed
Joseph, to Egypt descends

Genesis 38

Judah and Tamar - how does this story of Joseph's older brother fit into the story of Joseph? If you think the Providence of God (that God works in all things for good) is strong in the story of Joseph, wait until you read about Judah! He becomes the ancestor of David (see Ruth 4:18-22).

Genesis 39

Joseph prospers Potiphar
Potiphar's wife admires Joseph
Joseph resists and is "rewarded" with a prison sentence
Joseph runs the prison

Genesis 40

Joseph interprets the dreams of two prisoners; good news for one, bad news for the other.

Genesis 41

Pharaoh dreams
No one can interpret his dreams
But Joseph can - seven years of plenty will be followed by seven years of famine
Joseph has a plan and prospers

Genesis 42-44

Joseph's brothers come to Egypt for food

Genesis 45

Joseph's brothers are shocked when Joseph reveals that he is not only alive but now "ruler over them."

Genesis 46-47

Father Jacob goes to Egypt and they settle in the land of Goshen.

Genesis 48

Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, blessed by Jacob

Genesis 49

Jacob dies

Genesis 50

The truth: You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good (50:20)